

The MESSENGER

of
OUR LADY of
AFRICA



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**CONGREGATION
OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS
OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA
(White Sisters)**

ORIGIN AND AIM: The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa was founded in 1869 by Cardinal Lavigerie, to rescue, moralize and regenerate the pagan and Mohammedan woman, and through her attain the family and society. Exclusively vowed to the Apostolate in Africa, the Sisters devote their lives to the natives in every work of mercy and charity . . . Catechetical, Medical, Educational.

GOVERNMENT AND APPROBATION:

The Congregation is governed by a Superior General who depends directly on the Holy See. The Constitutions were definitely approved by decree the 14th of December 1909 and promulgated on the 3rd of January 1910.

SPIRIT: The Spirit of the Congregation is one of obedience, humility, simplicity, and zeal; and the life of the Sisters one of poverty, mortification and labor.

* * * *

The Congregation numbers over 1,500 Professed Sisters who are devoting their lives to the Natives in 120 Missions, that spread out through—

North Africa: Algeria, Tunisia, Atlas Mountains, Sahara.

West Africa: The Gold Coast, French West Africa.

East Africa: Kenya, Nyassaland, Tanganyika, Uganda, Rhodesia, Belgian Congo, Rwanda, Urundi.

* * * *

OUR AMERICAN HOME IS AT:

White Sisters Convent
319 Middlesex Avenue
Metuchen, New Jersey

**THE MESSENGER OF
OUR LADY OF AFRICA**

is edited and published bi-monthly with ecclesiastical approbation by the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters), Metuchen, New Jersey. Annual subscription \$1.00. Entered as second class matter December 15, 1931, at the post office of Metuchen, New Jersey, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES

Three Masses are said monthly for the living and deceased benefactors of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. Moreover, they share in the prayers and apostolic labors of over fifteen hundred White Sisters, who are working in the African Missions; and in the prayers and acts of self denial that the Natives, so willingly, offer up daily for their benefactors.

**TO AVOID THE MISSIONS
UNNECESSARY EXPENSE,**

kindly notify us immediately of a change of address. If you do not, the postal authorities will tax us for their notification.

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Our 75th Anniversary

WE READ in Cardinal Lavigerie's first pastoral letter after his appointment as Archbishop of Algiers in 1867: "Algiers is only the threshold of a vast continent with more than two hundred million inhabitants. . . Their conversion must be the ultimate aim of all our efforts."

That same year Algeria was struck by a series of terrible disasters. First came an epidemic of cholera that swept away 60,000 people. Then a plague of locust destroyed the crops. Finally there were floods and heavy snow. The result was a shocking famine, in which the people could do nothing but lie down and die and the government did little but let them die. There were swarms of starving and homeless children.

The new Archbishop had a heart-rending talk with a wandering ten year old boy. Then and there he decided to take responsibility for these abandoned waifs. He began with the one child and soon had two thousands on his hands, for whom he organized two homes, which he confided to existing religious communities in the diocese.

Cardinal Lavigerie soon realized the need of a mission army solely consecrated to Africa if his works of mercy were to be continued and the march on to the conquest of this great Continent for Christ were to be achieved. In January, 1868, three students of the diocesan seminary, encouraged by their rector a Lazarist Priest, offered themselves to be trained for missionary work and were accepted. Others joined them and in October, the novitiate was opened in charge of a Jesuit Father assisted by a Sulpician. On February 2nd, 1869, they received the distinctive habit of the White Fathers and the Society of the Missionaries of Africa was launched.

It is then that the Archbishop turned his thoughts to the establishment of a congregation of missionary sisters, similar in spirit and aim. Such a foundation he considered indispensable to the African Missions. Due to the strict seclusion of Mohammedan women, excepting near male relatives, no men may penetrate in the interior of the home. If the family was to be won for Christ, the mother must be contacted — and only missionary sisters could do it.

As a result on September 8th, 1869, the birthday of Our Blessed Mother, the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa came into existence. The Archbishop had sent a Priest, from the Diocese, to Brittany with the special mission of bringing back young ladies desirous to consecrate their lives to the salvation of the Africans, — it was on this day that they landed in Algiers.

That first night when they were all by themselves and informed that they were the chosen foundresses, they witnessed loneliness, and felt very weak, very helpless. But it is precisely out of the weak things of this world that God fashions instruments for His work. The tiny seed took root in the African soil and is now bearing a rich harvest as we witness after these 75 years.



Trust in God.

He has chosen

you to do

His work.

He Himself

will be your

comfort and reward.

*His Eminence
Cardinal Lavigerie,*

Founder of the White
Fathers and the White
Sisters.

Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

A S A GRATEFUL tribute to Our Blessed Mother for these 75 years of graces and blessings, and in union with Our Holy Father and the Catholic World, our Reverend Mother General has consecrated our whole Congregation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on March 25th, 1944. September the 8th, 1944, our anniversary day, was chosen as the date on which each individual Community would ratify for itself the Act that took place at our Motherhouse in Algiers.

This renewal of Consecration, for we are dedicated in a special way to Our Blessed Mother, was preceded by a novena of prayers for the great intentions:

1. The conversion of sinners in general, and in particular of the infidels of Africa.
2. In union with all who pray to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for a Just and Lasting Peace.
3. For our novitiates and an increase of vocations.
4. A special De Profundis was added for all our deceased Sisters, now numbering more than 441, whose labors and sacrifices helped to build our Congregation.



*How good God
is to us . . .
Let us render
Him due
thanks not
only with
empty sounding
words but express
it by our
daily acts.*

*Venerable Mother
M. SALOME,*

First Superior General and
Co-foundress.

We know that His Excellency Bishop Birraux, Superior General of the White Fathers, has already consecrated the Society of the Missionaries of Africa to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on December 8th, 1943; that His Excellency Bishop Mercier, W.F., Prefect of the Sahara did the same for his mission territory on February 2nd, 1944; also the Missions of Kabylie (Atlas Mountains) were consecrated to Our Blessed Mother under this particular title on March 25th, 1944.

NOTE

The White Fathers are established at Alexandria Bay, N. Y. They also have a house of studies at 8500 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Maryland.

Congratulations . . .

As we go to press, we gladly learn of the elevation of His Excellency the Most Reverend R. J. Cushing to the Archbishopric of Boston.

We, the White Sisters of Africa, unite our voices, to those of missionaries the world over, offering our sincerest good wishes and the assurance of our prayerful remembrance to our devoted Friend, Benefactor and *Father of the Missions*.

Ad multos annos!

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary

O Queen of the Most Holy Rosary!

What an inspiration!

Thou art to us all, Sweet Virgin Mary,

Our dear consolation!

"Hail Mary the Lord is with thee," we say;

And Marine, and Sailor,

Soldier, Aviator finds calm each day.

Thy prayer gives him valor!

Though far off, yet he's near with his ros'ry,

While his "Mom" at thy feet,

Whispers, "pray for us now, Holy Mary!"

Thus with thee their hearts meet.

What souvenirs thy rosary brings near:

Childhood, First Communion,

Youth, Vocation! All come to one's mind here.

O lasting companion!

As we touch and pass each bead, O Mary

We feel thy peace within;

So, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary,

Who can't love thee, Virgin?

M. R. L. Goulet.

NEEDED

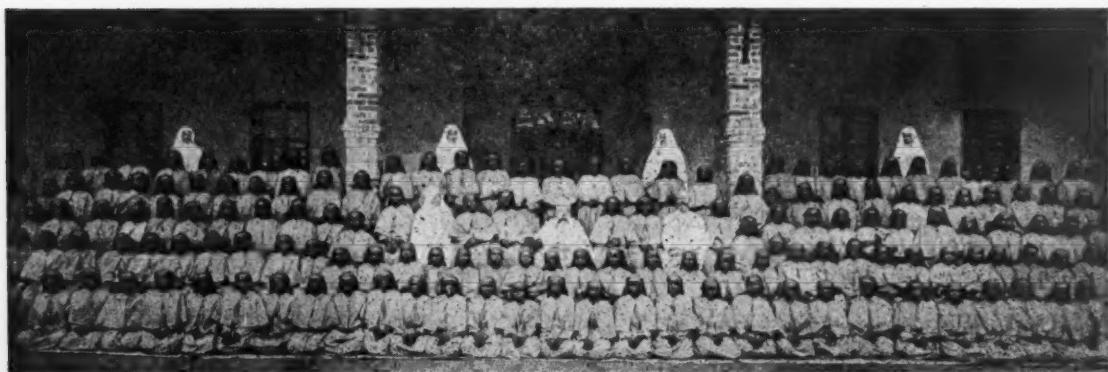
Volumes of "New Practical Meditation for Everyday" by Reverend Bruno Vercruyse, S. J. (in English) are needed at the Novitiate of the Native Sisters of Uganda "Banabikira" or Daughters of Mary.

New or used sets will be gratefully received and forwarded to destination — or any contribution to help purchase the books.

Kindly address to: Reverend Mother Superior

White Sisters Convent 319 Middlesex Ave. — Metuchen, New Jersey

Daughters of Mary (Uganda) have 350 Professed Sisters



1869



Victims of the Famine.



Medical works important feature of Sisters' occupations.

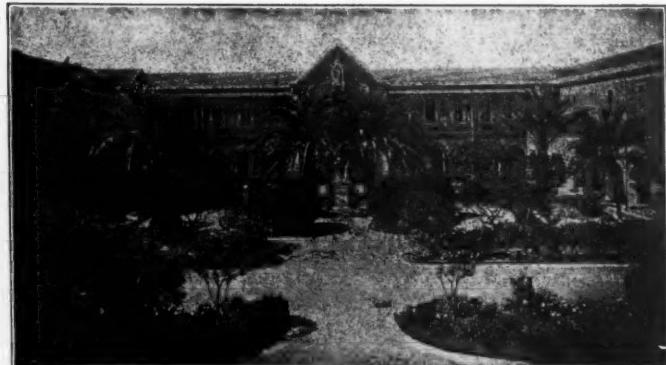
*Native Sisters
15 Diocesan Novitiate
[Statistics of 1939]*



Catechetical
instruction
leads souls
to God.



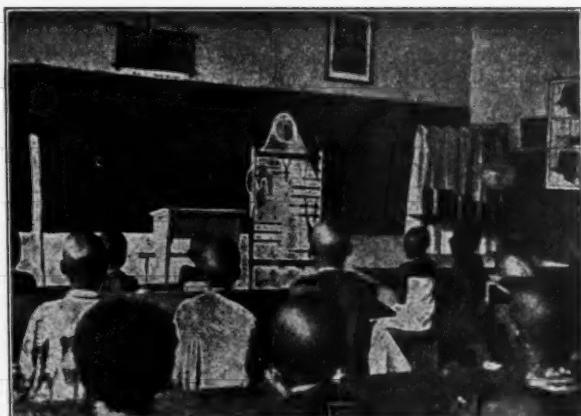
1944



Motherhouse, Algiers, No. Africa.



Orphans are
dear to
the Heart
of Jesus.



Immense strides in Education are in process.



502 Professed Sisters

106 Novices

150 Postulants

OUR TRAVELERS

St. Charles, Africa.

July 20th, 1944.

My dearest Family:

Hear we are at the Mother House at last. Arrived Sunday morning July 16th., after a twenty-four hour trip from Rabat, across the arid wastelands of Morocco and the fertile land of Algeria. It has been a long trip.

Lisbon to Casablanca is nearly three hours by plane—no sensation at all—much more smooth than the train. Passed Cadiz, Southern part of Spain, Gibraltar, Tangiers, Rabat on to Casa. On account of the war the windows of the plane were painted white, we saw nothing of this beautiful route.

Enjoyed our two weeks stay in Portugal immensely. At Casa very hot, American soldiers are everywhere, nice to hear English again. Received hospitality at the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, lovely place—beautiful gardens. Next day we went by autobus to Rabat to join Mother and four Sisters.

At Rabat we spent four days with the Franciscan Sisters of Mary and saw the city. Thrilled to visit the Arab sections, every body speaks French in Morocco, including the Arabs. We "taxi'd" in horse-drawn carts driven by Arabs . . . the only means of transportation. How different is Morocco from America! We enjoy the novelty of everything: veiled women everywhere. Several experiences with the Arabs, tell us it is hard to deal with them as American soldiers have spoiled them with their generous tips.

French section of Rabat is very beautiful. Had chance to visit the Palace and



magnificent gardens of the "Resident General," also Arab museum and the ramparts. From Rabat to Oudja crossed arid mountains of Morocco and had the luck to get places on a "rapid" EXPRESS.

Would have many things to tell you, other details will be in the diary. I am fine. Hope you have not worried. How are you all? . . . How I pray for you . . . Many thanks for the "goodies" mints and things which lasted all through the trip and appreciated by all.

I hope to go in the Missions in September. Will soon start learning languages. People have suffered much in North Africa, everything is lacking.

All is quiet here, remember don't worry.

Union of prayers, love to all, Always in Jesus.

Sister M. Irena.

(Miss T. Gemme, Worcester, Mass.)

1869

Developments

1944

THE CONGREGATION of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, commonly known as White Sisters, was founded in 1869 at Algiers in Africa and is vowed exclusively to the apostolate in Africa. The beginnings were difficult, but God blessed the good will and generosity of these **eight young ladies** from Brittany and He gave the increase.

At the beginning of the Century, there were some 300 Professed Sisters and 25 mission houses in Africa. The Sisters had already penetrated in the interior of Africa: The Sahara, Tanganyika, Uganda, the Congo and French Sudan. There were five recruiting convents outside of Africa.

An idea of the growth of the Congregation and the good accomplished with the help of God's grace may be obtained from the following figures submitted in the Report presented the Members of the last General Chapter held at the Motherhouse in May, 1937. (The General Chapter of the Congregation meets regularly every six years—the one scheduled for 1943 was postponed due to the war and the impossibility of travelling.)

In 1931 there were 979 Professed Sisters.

In 1937 there were 1,252 Professed Sisters.

In this specified period 25 new mission houses were opened.

- 19,665,784 sick patients were cared for in our leper asylums, hospitals and dispensaries.

The Sisters baptized 2,336 adults in periculo mortis, and 19,763 children also in periculo mortis.

July, 1938 to July, 1939 statistics, latest available, reported that the 1,348 Professed Sisters had charge of 114 missions in Africa.

Outside of Africa the Congregation had 32 convents divided into Postulantes, Novitiates, Houses of Study, Procurés and Sanitarias for our sick Sisters.

Today 1944 after 75 years the Congregation counts more than **1,550 living Professed Sisters** scattered throughout Africa, with recruiting convents in several countries of Europe, Canada and the United States. Besides **441 Sisters** having completed their earthly career, in the service of God and the Africans, have gone to receive the reward of their mission labors.

Learning Geography

by pointing out
new mission centers
needed.



IN HONOR OF OUR
75th BIRTHDAY

Please join us in our prayers of Thanksgiving.

Also, why not send us *FIVE NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS* as an act of joint gratitude to Almighty God for the good realized through these years.

The Outward Sign

A LITTLE NEGRESS of some twelve years old was once given a picture by a White Sister. The picture was one of two little white girls and was accepted with delighted thanks by the child.

Some short time later, Sister found the little girl still where she had left her, intently examining the picture this way and that with a puzzled air.

"Sister," she asked at last, aren't these girls Christians? . . . See, they are wearing neither medal nor Rosary round their necks."

It was a fact — neither of the girls in the picture had any visible sign of her Faith about her and this would appear strange to the native of Uganda for everyone in that country proudly bears some indication of their Christianity.

Sister had to be quick at finding an explanation.

"Well, you see," she said, "those little girls wear many more clothes than you do, —they have a Rosary in a pocket, and their medals are hidden by their frocks."

A broad smile lit up the little one's features. She was satisfied with Sister's explanation. She would never have understood had she been told that any Catholic in the world went about with no emblem at all of their holy religion.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

RANSOMED PAGAN BABIES

Miss A. Harding
Miss F. Eichstadt
Mrs. D. Gaudet
Miss I. Gemme
Miss M. Matson
St. Mary School, Lee, MASS.
Sacred Heart School, Worcester, MASS.
SS Cyril and Methodius School, Joliet, ILL.
Miss G. Berger
Miss Mary Roberts, Cape Breton, N. S.
Mrs. Jerome Tompkins, New Waterford, N. S.
Sallez Academy, Redford, N. Y.

TO CLOTHE A CHILD FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Mrs. C. R. Welch
Mr. C. K. Kwiat

TO KEEP A SANCTUARY LAMP BURNING

Mrs. B. Jakubowicz
Miss M. Jakubowicz
Mrs. C. Bartell
Miss J. Burns
Mrs. L. J. Martel
Miss T. G. Caufield

TO SUPPORT THE LEPROS

Mrs. J. Donnelly
Mrs. G. B. Yale
Mr. C. K. Kwiat

TO PROVIDE BREAD FOR THE ORPHANS

Mrs. C. Bartell
Miss M. M. Santori
Mr. C. K. Kwiat
Mrs. R. Howard
Miss R. R. Haggerty
St. Scholastica Academy, Chicago, Ill.

OBITUARY

Right Reverend Msgr. J. H. Heibel, Erie, PA.

Rev. C. Orth, W.F.

Rev. Chignier, W.F.

Brother Evariste, Brother Leveille-Durand, Brother Tuponey of the White Fathers.

Rev. L. A. Simard, Williamsett, MASS.

Rev. Sister Mary Stephen Gillen, Nursing Sisters of the Sick Poor, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Bernard Jarvis, killed in Action.

Mr. T. Carney, Floral Park, N. Y.

Mrs. G. Somers, Maplewood, N. J.

**THE WHITE SISTERS ARE IN AMERICA—
AND THEY ARE HERE FOR ONE PURPOSE—
TO RECRUIT AMERICAN GIRLS
FOR THE
AFRICAN MISSIONS OF THE WHITE SISTERS.**

They have a job ready for every girl who would offer herself to them. They come to America and they call to the American girl now more than ever. They see the American nurses and the Women's Auxiliary Corps in North Africa, they witness the job they are doing.

Because of this, they are sure that the American girls can do the work assigned to the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (the White Sisters). For this reason they have a postulate in the Diocese of Trenton, at Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, New Jersey.

Any young girl between eighteen and thirty-three who is interested may write, for further information, to:

Reverend Mother Superior
White Sisters Convent
Metuchen, New Jersey.

W I L L
Our Legal Title Is
**THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA
METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY**

Don't forget the missions in your WILL! You will never regret it, now or later. Why not include this clause?

"I hereby bequeath to the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa for use in their African Missions, the sum of Dollars."

SAILING TO AFRICA

Emphasizes Appeal For Vocations

*Mother M. Mauricia,
who sailed from the United States on June 13th, 1944, en route
for North Africa.*

— ON THE OCEAN —

"I ignore what the Lord has in store for us. This second day of ocean journey, already five Sisters are on their cots — if I did not know what sea-sickness is like, I would be worried. Yet the sea is so calm, I wonder how we would fare if it were rough! . . .

Aboard there are 210 passengers, of these 80 are Protestant missionaries — men and women, among whom there are 30 Ministers. They are on their way to Egypt, Tripoli, Nigeria, even for Central Africa. Daily a Minister groups the children, they sing hymns, he tells them stories and explains the Bible.

We are only eleven White Sisters and there is no Priest aboard. There are Catholics among the crew but few among the passengers. Our great privation is to have neither Mass nor Holy Communion. There is a beautiful little Chapel. To make up for all we are missing, Sunday we went and sang the ordinary of the Mass and other hymns: Magnificat, Ave Maris Stella, etc.

On the 26th of June we are at Lisbon. The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary offer us a most gracious and cordial hospitality. And now for the last part of our trip. What a fervent Magnificat we shall sing when at last we reach the Motherhouse.

Let us redouble our love for the good God and beg Him earnestly to choose and send many vocations for His Mission field, good sturdy vocations."

